



**Name of Institution:** Catholic Relief Services (CRS)  
**Name of Project:** Youth Emergency Action Committees (YEAC) II: Empowering Youth in the Caribbean for Community Disaster Risk Reduction  
**Award Number:** AID-OFDA-G-11-00196  
**CRS Project Number:** 7460037/FY11-/JM/001  
**Name of Report:** FY 2012 Annual Report  
**Period Covered by Report:** Sept. 2011- Sept. 2012  
**Geographic Region:** Caribbean  
**Date of Report:** December 31, 2012  
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<b>Sector Name:</b>	Natural and Technological Risks.
<b>Sub-sector Name:</b>	Disaster Preparedness, Mitigation, and Management
<b>Objective:</b>	To reduce disaster risk by increasing the disaster management capacity of vulnerable communities in Jamaica, St. Lucia, Grenada, and the Dominican Republic.

## **Introduction**

This is the Annual Report for first year of the CRS “Youth Emergency Action Committees (YEAC) II: Empowering Youth in the Caribbean for Community Disaster Risk Reduction” project implemented with the St. Patrick’s Foundation in Jamaica, Caritas Puerto Plata in the Dominican Republic, and Caritas Antilles in St. Lucia and Grenada. This report covers activities from September 1, 2011 to September 30, 2012.

### **A. Background**

Catholic Relief Services, with support from USAID/OFDA and in partnership with Caritas and the St. Patrick’s Foundation, is implementing the Youth Emergency Action Committees (YEAC) II project in vulnerable communities in Jamaica, St. Lucia, Grenada, and the Dominican Republic.

This project is based and builds on the experiences and successes of the Community Risk Reduction through Youth Emergency Action Committees in Urban Neighborhoods of Kingston, Jamaica project (YEAC, 2009-2011). Project activities include the formation and strengthening of YEACs in the target communities; engaging youth as leaders in a process of community risk reduction; training community members in Disaster Preparedness, Mitigation, and Management (DPMM); developing community hazard risk reduction plans and selecting, planning, and implementing hazard risk mitigation activities.

### **B. Summary and Highlights**

Throughout the implementation of this project, CRS and its partners have learned so much both about the challenges of the day to day implementation and management of a multi-country initiative, as well as the capacity and motivation of communities in the Caribbean to confront their readiness to respond to disasters. As has been well documented through the quarterly reports of the past year, while there have been issues in the management of the project, the progress made has been measured and significant.

Across the four target countries of Jamaica (Jam), St. Lucia (SLC), Grenada (GR), and the Dominican Republic (DR), the first half of the project implementation was committed to ensuring that start-up activities were well underway, including the recruitment, hiring, and training of project staff, to completing the baseline survey, which included community leaders, government officials and households. In this time, the design of tools for implementation and monitoring and evaluation, including individualized annual activities plans for each implementing partner were also created. In each country, local partners spent time sensitizing local communities and key representatives from relevant organizations such as the national disaster management agencies and national Red Cross. In Jamaica, Grenada, and the Dominican Republic, partners were able to spread the word about the project’s aims, objectives, and activities, recruit an initial cadre of youth, and hold the first training camp and trainings in basic Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR).

As this project was an expansion of the work of CRS and its partner in Jamaica, new YEACs were formed the Dominican Republic, St. Lucia, and Grenada. Trainings throughout the year in DRR and teamwork, as well as a refresher course in Kingston, Jamaica aimed at

strengthening and deepening their knowledge for future use in training their fellow community members.

One of the greatest accomplishments of the project is that the youth continue to forge relationships and meet regularly. They are energetic, committed and have a growing knowledge both of their communities and DRR. Local implementing partners are growing in their own capacities to coordinate with key stakeholders and to improve their overall management of the activities despite the specific challenges of working with the target group of vulnerable youth. Given all of the challenges in implementing on the islands, CRS recognizes that with very little time left, there is much work to be done but is confident that with the most recent partner staff changes and project progress, the value of the project is not to be denied and will finish with great success.

### C. Report on Advances Toward Indicators and Targets

Indicator	Project Target	Accomplishments	% of target reached	Explanation
1. Number of people benefitting from reduced risk.	Jam - 94,839	183	➤ 2%	To date, this number only represents YEAC members trained. <sup>1</sup>
	SLC - 8,185	29	➤ 1%	
	GR - 1,650	37	1%	
	DR - 6,500	80	➤ 1%	
	Total - 111,174	329	➤ 3%	
2. Number of YEACs formed or strengthened.	Jam – 8	8	100%	
	SLC – 2	3	150%	
	GR – 1	2	200%	
	DR – 4	4	100%	
	Total – 15	17	113%	
3. Number and Percentage of YEAC members that are women.	Jam–72 of 180 (40%)	74 of 149 (49%)	122%	
	SLC– 18 of 45 (40%)	12 of 20 (63%)	158%	
	GR– 6 of 15 (40%)	15 of 37 (41%)	102%	
	DR– 24 of 60 (40%)	74 of 159 (46%)	115%	
	Total– 120 of 300 (40%)	130 of 318 (40%)	100%	
4. Number of people trained in disaster preparedness, mitigation, and management.	Jam - 9,180	183	2%	
	SLC– 1,245	29	2.3%	
	GR– 465	42	5%	

<sup>1</sup> This reported number only represents YEAC members trained thus far. The majority of the direct beneficiaries will be included in the figure after completion of the community edutainment activities, with the indirect beneficiaries calculated after completion of the community mitigation activities. The final targets for this indicator represent the total direct and indirect project beneficiaries as defined in the project proposal

Indicator	Project Target	Accomplishments	% of target reached	Explanation
	DR -1,860	125	6.7%	
	Total – 12,750	379	3.0%	
5. Number and percent of beneficiaries retaining disaster preparedness, mitigation, and management knowledge two months after training.	Jam - 5,508 (60 %)	-	-	
	SLC– 747 (60%)	-	-	
	GR– 279 (60%)	-	-	
	DR– 1,116 (60%)	-	-	
	Total– 7,650 (60%)	-	-	
6. Number of hazard risk reduction plans, policies or curriculum developed.	2 curriculum 15 plans	-	-	
7. Number of communities adopting hazard mitigation measures.	Jam – 8	-	-	This activity is scheduled for implementation from December 2012 to February 2013.
	SLC– 2	-	-	
	GR– 1	-	-	
	DR – 4	-	-	
	Total – 15	-	-	

## D. Report on Advance of Activities

### **Activity 1: Community Sensitization.**

This activity started with the baseline surveys in Q 1 and 2 and continued through a variety of activities over the course of the last year. Activities aimed to continue to update the communities on progress and hold meeting remained a critical part of the project.

Partners and the YEACs have engaged in community clean-up activities and home visits to promote the work of the project and increase awareness. One successful example took place in Jamaica, in partnership with the private sector corporation J. Wray & Nephew. Fifty-nine youth volunteered for three days to conduct a gully cleaning event. Wray & Nephew covered some of the costs for supplies, transportation, and refreshments. The Rangers removed garbage, trees, and other debris from approximately a quarter mile of gully. This gully often overflowed its banks which placed residents of Seaview Gardens and a section of Waterhouse at risk of flooding. Additionally, neighboring businesses such as J Wray & Nephew would be impacted by the flood waters. Related clean-up activities were also undertaken in Grenada where two clean-up activities were carried out over the reported period, one in each of the two project areas.

In the Dominican Republic, in summer 2012, participants donned newly designed t-shirts, hats, and light-weight backpacks, designed a simple flier, and took to the streets to visit each of the approximately 5,000 homes in the project area. As hoped, the logo and t-shirts greatly increased the receptivity of neighbors and participants are looking forward to visiting schools, churches, and other community groups in the upcoming period.

### **Activity 2: Form or Strengthen YEAC Committees.**

After some challenges in recruiting new youth and ensuring consistent participation among the youth volunteers, in all four countries, groups meet regularly, make plans for future activities, develop and practice skits for future community sensitization, review training received, and take advantage of this unique social space and community to talk about other issues that they face as youth in vulnerable communities.

Membership has increased across the board, in Jamaica for example, where the total number of participants now stands at 149. The project in Jamaica has struggled, though, due to the turnover of the project management staff.

In August, at the monthly Officer's Core meeting, 22 YEAC youth leaders (11 male, 11 female) participated in activities to strengthen the group's leadership and sense of identity, including information and discussions on roles and responsibilities, organizational structure/chains of command, standardized meetings, and issues of group identity. In September, 28 members were gathered for participation in a Restorative Justice Circle to begin to identify and address various conflicts within the group. This experience was very cathartic for the group as it gave them the opportunity to voice their feelings of concern and frustration that have been festering over time. Additionally, the youth conducted a SWOT analysis of the group as a whole, as well as of each individual committee. This process was integral in allowing the group to recognize their accomplishments and celebrate the positives while formulating concrete steps to address their weaknesses.

After a slow start up in St. Lucia, during the summer the project trained 11 youth in a three day leadership workshop wherein 55% of participants were female. In Grenada, the group is a bit larger, though, there is a problem ensuring consistent participation.

In the Dominican Republic, the partner Caritas Puerto Plata is quite strong, as evidenced by the strong performance of the DR component of the project. In addition, CRS has enjoyed a very close working relationship with Caritas in the DR for many years which also helps to facilitate a stronger process in country. Of the four target areas, the DR project has been the most consistent and will like finish its main activities by the official project end date.

### **Activity 3: Train YEACs -Training of Multipliers.**

Training events started very early on in the project implementation. CRS and its partners have strengthened its network over the course of the last year and been able to call on local disaster authorities as well as the Red Cross to facilitate and lead trainings in topics most important and relevant, such as DRR and team-building.

Most impressively, in Jamaica, ten youth participants reported that they felt they could serve as lead facilitators in replications of the training at the community level. Successful replications of the basic DRR training were implemented in four communities which were comprised of presentations in risk management, hurricane and earthquake preparedness and response.

In Grenada and St. Lucia, camps were held on training in leadership skills and basic disaster risk reduction, and inclusive Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments (VCAs) were created in two vulnerable communities.

In the Dominican Republic, 80 youth (20 from each committee, 47 male, 33 female) participated in a training for multipliers, to strengthen the capacity of youth for community

awareness raising events. Participants discussed topics such as communication, basic pedagogical techniques, session planning, and skills for group management and use of multi-media. Perhaps most importantly, the participants then practiced those skills by planning and delivering a brief session to their peers, developing their confidence to stand and share ideas in front of others in an organized setting, an opportunity that many have not had before the project.

#### **Activity 4: Community “Edutainment” Training Events.**

While youth throughout the project are more cognizant of risks and familiar with pertinent language in relation to disasters, project managers agree that there is value in continuing to strengthen their capacities, both at a technical level and in terms soft skills for community development before they will be ready act as multipliers. Community edutainment events were postponed to strengthen both the technical knowledge and skills for community development.

#### **Activity 5: Develop or Update and Disseminate Hazard Risk Reduction Plans.**

The first step in the development of the Hazard Risk Reduction plans is the implementation of Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments (VCAs). As of September 30<sup>th</sup>, VCAs are complete in 9 of 17 communities, including all communities in St. Lucia, Grenada, and the Dominican Republic. Two additional VCAs have been completed in Jamaica, to be included in the first quarterly report of FY13, with an additional postponed due to the timing of Hurricane Sandy.

#### **Activity 6: Select and Implement Community Disaster Mitigation Activities.**

Activity scheduled for future periods.

As mentioned above, several committees have scheduled small scale mitigation activities that will be taking place in the next quarter, but the larger-scale activities are planned to take place from December 2012 to February 2013, following the hurricane season.

### **E. Report on Barriers Encountered**

Looking back at the first year of this expanded project, a number of challenges continued to play out throughout the implementation of the project.

#### *Organizational Capacity*

It has been widely acknowledged by CRS that the partners in this project, particularly in Jamaica, St. Lucia, and Grenada have limitations in their capacity. Their greatest strength is their commitment to communities they serve but they are often very representative of the occasional instability that is reflected in our target communities. There is a very high rate of staff turnover which has really hampered the progress of the project in a way that was otherwise unforeseen by CRS. In all three of the above mentioned countries the YEAC project managers have changed more than once. This has caused upheaval among the groups when these staff changes take place in that the partner staff has invested significant time in developing trusting relationships with the youth and the changes result in the need for training new staff and the time lost. Given that the CRS Program Manager was operating out of the Dominican Republic, it was difficult to spend enough time in each of the countries to ensure that there was enough of a presence to avoid such management complications. CRS also needed to spend the most significant portion of its time working with partners to improve

capacity and support in reporting and financial documentation. In spite of the major challenges, improvements have been observed among the partners and CRS expects that over the next few months there will continue to be growth and positive achievement in the project.

### *Challenging Communities*

It goes without saying that the target communities and their local reality heavily influence the individual successes or challenges of the project in each country. Each one is unique and, as such, has played an important role in the variety of achievements to date. Additionally, we recognize that in Jamaica and the Lesser Antilles, for example, the project area is generally characterized by low income levels, high unemployment, and low levels of education and literacy. In Kingston in particular, youth continue to have problems moving freely and safely from one side of the community to another; and unfortunately, one of our own project participants was shot and killed several months ago.

### *At-Risk Youth*

Lack of experience of the youth participants in participation in organized activities or groups continues to challenge the project, though the year has shown tremendous growth in this area. Participation in activities can represent a serious sacrifice as they are often working to contribute to the income of the household. Despite the continuing challenges, CRS has seen individuals among the group really stand out and lead their peers, remaining committed against all odds.